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Voucher Supporters and Teacher Union Square Off at First DCA

By Mike Vasilinda



Supporters of vouchers for 78 thousand private school children and the state's teacher union squared off in a state appeals court today. The teachers want the vouchers declared unconstitutional, and as Mike Vasilinda tells us, they first have to convince the appeals court they were harmed when the money went to private instead of public



schools.

"Enough is enough" chanted two thousand Florida teachers when they came to the Capitol in January, upset about working conditions and the lack of funding. Four days later, ten thousand kids receiving vouchers for private schools took the day off to protest a lawsuit the teachers had filed challenging the voucher program.

"The first case today is JoAnn MacCall vs. Governor Rick Scott."

The two sides squared off in an appeals court Monday. A lower court found the teachers were not harmed by the scholarship program and could not sue. Now they are appealing to get their day in court.

"Mike, if we really believed that there are schools that aren't doing what they are supposed to be doing, then it is

the state's responsibility to get in there and shore up those schools for every student. Not give some an out" says FEA President JoAnn McCall.

The scholarships are funded by donations from private corporations, who then get a dollar for dollar tax credit for every dollar they give.

Supporters of the voucher program, like RB Holmes, say a ruling against it could be catastrophic for kids.

"If we do not win this lawsuit, then eighty thousand boys and girls will be literally evicted from their schools" says Holmes.

Tampa mom Cheryl Joseph originally sent her three kids to a public elementary school.

"When it came to the middle school, it was a C school. I didn't want my kids going to a C school" says Joseph.

The voucher program provides each student with just over 56 hundred dollars a year for tuition.

The state is losing about 450 million this year in tax revenue going to voucher students. It is expected to grow to as much as 550 million next year.

